# The Seed Sower.

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## Lost Days.

(HOUSE OF LIFE.—LXXXVI.)

THE lost days of my life until to-day
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?

I do not see them here: but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
"I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?"
"And I—and I—thyself," (lo! each one saith,)
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSETTI.

## A Sword sent by Christ.

A SERMON BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

Matthew x, 34.

No careful reader of the Gospel narrative can fail to notice how constantly the disciples misunderstood Jesus, and how this misunderstanding arose through their prosaic and sheer literalism. The poetical, mystic and imaginative language of Jesus constantly gravelled them. They took his bold metaphors by the letter, and the letter landed them in all sorts of absurdities. When he warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees their thoughts rose no higher than the kneading trough and the baker's oven. When he told them that he had meat to eat they knew not of they asked, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" When he says "Ye must be born again," one replies, "How can a man be born when he is old." When he speaks of the kingdom of God he is supposed to be speaking of a kind of Macca-

## The Seed Sower.

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**13th YEAR.**

It has never been subsidised, and occupies an absolutely independent position. But it is a welcome guest in many a Church and home, and we confidently appeal to our friends to make it more widely known. It has only one object—to serve the cause of Liberal Christianity by providing thoughtful literature in a popular form, which may strengthen the faith of the faithful, and enlighten the darkness of the dark.

The *Seed Sower* is admirably adapted for localising, and facilities are provided for that purpose. The circulation is already larger than that of any other magazine or journal published to meet the wants of our Free Churches. It gives a larger amount of matter, and every increase of circulation will be used to secure increased efficiency.

All business communications should be addressed to
MR. ARNOLD WOOD, WHITEHALL CHAMBERS, COLMORE ROW, BIRMINGHAM.
Letters for the Editor to be sent to 120, Gough Road, Birmingham.

bean kingdom with places at court and a very earthly throne. Having declared he had seen the Father his hearers at once pictured a visible bodily meeting; they had no inkling of that exalted mood of the spirit when the meaning of the world seems to become suddenly crystal clear, the solid earth to be a vision of divine loveliness and the universe has a voice calling peace and faith to the creature, and God and the soul are the only realities. Again and again we find Jesus compelled to explain his spiritual meaning, and not unfrequently obliged to rebuke the literalism of the listeners. It is the tragic fate of the idealist ever to be thus misunderstood.

The process of literalising the words of Jesus begun with the disciples has gone on with undiminished persistence for nineteen centuries.

Men have taken the fluid poetical language of Jesus and hardened it into opaque dogmas. Now it is only Christ's moral precepts that are to be taken literally: the law of love, the duty of humility, the subjection of self, the purification of the heart. All the rest is parable—mystic hints of the blessedness of the emancipated spirit.

But the literal interpretation of the mystical imaginative language of Jesus has so long had its way, that even among those who have cast off Bibliolatry, for whom the Bible is a book of human origin, who clearly see how foolish and superstitious is the notion of its infallibility, even we feel the influence of the old method of interpretation, and catch ourselves stumbling now and again over the sayings of Jesus—simply because we forget how he spake as an idealist. We too are slaves of the letter—only the language of literalism has a different result with us—namely it drives us away from the words of Jesus, makes us impatient with them, tempts us to visit them with moral condemnation. We too often live under the shadow of the orthodox literalists—agree with them in their method of interpretation—only with the result of condemning and rejecting, the words of Jesus as on a lower level of morality than that of modern thought, or as inappropriate to modern conditions.

Here are the words: "I came not to send peace but a sword," how many stumble over them?—think they are a strange contradiction to the angelic message "Peace on Earth, goodwill among men." What? Is Jesus the author of wars and bloodshed? Are we to think of him as fomenting quarrels in the family—setting children against their parents and parents against their children? How revolting! Surely we are not compelled to accept these words as a genuine utterance of the Prince of Peace?

Why not? Are they not true to fact?—true to experience? true always? Peace on earth is not and could not be the immediate result of Christ's teaching. Peace on earth is the fair and perfect flower which will be the final issue of that teaching, but its first effect is disturbing, provoking, upsetting, revolutionary. All progress goes through a long period of struggle. Not easily is any advance made. Every effort to get right and justice done is to set right and justice contending against evil and self-will. Every new thought is a sword—it provokes opposition. Men will live in peace with you if you will accept their traditions and conventions, but begin to think for yourself—strike out a new line—advance to a higher position—and you arouse hostility. Your higher thought which itself is so full of blessing for men only at first awakens their hatred, bigotry and contempt. To move into regions of conviction where your friends cannot follow you is to ensure sometimes their disapproval, and sometimes their persecution. Who has not known families in which the old words of Christ's have repeated themselves in actual experience? A son or a daughter is moved away from the family tradition about religion: the old creeds, the old ways of worship, the old habits become unreal and impossible; a broader, nobler, simpler thought of religion takes possession of the mind; the young thinker fights his way into a more rational and liberal position, and then, when the avowal is made what a sword enters into that family—and father is set against son and mother against the daughter—and there is a sad estrangement—much bitterness—not seldom angry reproaches, and worse still, the silent reproaches of sad and grief-stricken hearts. The more

beautiful conception of religion is a source of positive pain and division. Christ knew the meaning of his words when he said, "I came not to send peace but a sword." Ultimately he is the bringer of peace but immediately his message calls for sacrifice, develops resistance. Those whom we have always known and loved and with whom we wish to stand well, have an undoubted title to our consideration: but there comes a point when no consideration for others' feelings can keep the soul from taking a forward step—Truth calls it, honour calls it, conscience calls it, the welfare of humanity calls it and to refuse is to commit that fatal sin—to be disobedient to the heavenly vision. And then there is an inward struggle, or perhaps the parting of friends, which leaves heartaches for life, but which is inevitable if there is not to be a violation of the sanctities of conscience. To men of affectionate tempers these are among the very stormiest trials of experience, and to prefer the friendship of truth to that of Plato makes a greater demand on a generous nature, than any choice between loyalty to duty and physical pain. It is like a sword entering the bones.

We try to soften away the terrible words of Christ. As if we could explain away facts which are notorious to every reader of history, and to every one who has experience of what is passing in his own time. Truth is the harbinger of peace, and yet there never was a new truth which did not first come as a sword. We have seen it in the controversies of our own age. The new Truth of Geology which disproved the old theory of the six days creation—a truth which is now seen to reveal a far grander God than Genesis knew—what anger, what opposition—what division it caused. Men were cast out of Churches because of it—fathers would not speak to sons who had adopted the new view—professors were expelled from their chairs—the hungry wolves of bigotry were let loose. It has been so with every other great constructive truth of Science — Darwinism — Evolution — Anthropology—Astronomy—all have had at first disturbing effects. And when we come to directly religious and theological questions—then disturbances are intensified immeasurably. They have produced the strifes in families Jesus prophesied. Nay, any advance in character, in the moral standards —any manifest uplifting of the soul in purity and equity provokes men, and is at first a cause of enmity. Gentleness and Goodness stir up what is opposed to them: their presence is a rebuke, and rebukes arouse hostility. Thus it was with Jesus. Can you not understand how the presence and message of Christ stirred up to begin with sectarian animosities, class jealousies, and the rage of men who were steeped in mere formalism and convention? Can you not understand how the very Gospel of Peace was at first a sword? Did not every hearth and household become a battle-field in that war?

The legendary words of Simeon which have floated down to us in the Gospel narrative are another statement of the same truth, —"This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The work of every great religious teacher is two-fold in its results—his words and character and life awaken sympathy, and they arouse opposition. More than that—we say of any difficult conjuncture of circumstances that it tries what mettle men are made of, that it brings nobleness into a brighter light, and unmistakedly reveals meanness for what it is. The thoughts of many hearts are revealed. The crisis is a touchstone. And such a crisis a true man, delivering what message God has given him, always creates: he is an occasion of fall and rising to many —and to many more a sign spoken against, sometimes even a sword in the heart of those that love him best. The presence and the message, the truth and the teaching, the spirit and the example of Jesus did not have a uniform effect upon human souls. They acted as a moral shock upon the existing fabric of thought and life. They disturbed the old stagnant modes of thought and feeling, they set them in movement. They led to anxious self-questionings, general unsettlement. They destroyed that tranquil satisfaction with things as they were which secured repose and ease of mind to so many. And as a consequence Christ would be differ-

ently regarded by different men. Those who wished to know and hear the truth at all costs would welcome His message and thank God for it. Those who did not thus wish would shrink away from an influence which made them uncomfortable, even though they might have reason to think it would make them better.

In ordinary life there are many occurrences which act upon men in different ways: they bring out hidden tendencies for good or evil: the thoughts of the heart are revealed—the kind of man a man is stands clearly forth. Thus a railway accident, a shipwreck or the outbreak of an epidemic, or the sudden inheritance of a fortune each in their way cause revelation of character. They break through artificial habits of thought and language, and surprise men into being perfectly natural. A sudden alarm of fire in a house reveals to an observant eye the true nature and character of its various inmates. They reveal and develop unexpected virtues in one man's character: heroism, generosity, disinterestedness. They bring unimagined weakness to the surface in another; they reveal the man in whom there is not sufficient moral strength to bear the pressure of testing events; they show men selfish, cowardly, or in other ways unlike what they are supposed to be. In the same way a great political controversy, or a great war or some question of duty in the family, the church, or the state, acts as a solvent upon all sorts of persons, and gives them an impulse in one direction or another. It throws them back upon the principles which really rule them; it precipitates a great deal in them which might else have remained undecided—it forces them to take a side and so reveal themselves.

Now much more is this the case when men are brought into contact with a mind and heart of unwonted greatness. Many of us can remember something of the kind happening to ourselves at some period of our lives. We saw a person whom we shall never forget: and the event was such as to make us better or worse. A great character is too infectious to leave others just as they were, he inevitably sets thoughts and feelings in motion—not always however in friendly motion—but often in hostile motion. Never was this so true of anyone as of Jesus. Who can read the Gospel narrative without marking the aggressive force as well as the inviting sweetness of its hero, his destructive agency as well as his power of building up, his note of war as well as his promise of peace. So when he holds out his kindly arms with, "Come unto Me all ye," etc., and again with uplifted finger of rebuke thunders forth, "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," there is not only no real contradiction in words so diverse, but one is the necessary complement of the other. Fellowship with good is always enmity with evil: the message which is peace to one is a sword to another. The self-sacrificing Charity which fills some with goodness, fills others with scorn. The truth which to you is enlargement, freedom, joy—others fight against to the last. To reject the truth is to fall. Do you blame the truth? Do you say that truth should be withheld because it will develop in some men the spirit of persecution and cause bloodshed? Then there is no progress. The truth of Christ is the sword of Christ. It divides—it rebukes—it makes enemies as well as friends. On the one side it gathers to him all that have the least sympathy with truth and goodness—on the other, men stand aloof in anger or in sullen suspicion. On some the charm of his stronger and purer soul is powerful to strengthen and refine—with others dislike deepens into hatred. He who is set for the rising of some is set by that very fact for the fall of others.

So it is that every new truth and every noble life is a sword as well as a benediction. To some it is a savour of life unto life, to others a savour of death unto death. Judas grows in the same air as John, and the Pharisee hardened himself before the word which melted the harlot to repentance. Is Jesus to be blamed? Was he not a profoundly true although a profoundly terrible prophet when he said that his teaching and message would provoke divisions and be a sword in the world? But so it has been, and so it is with every thought by which the world is moved on a stage of human progress.

Oh! that truth may find in us its friends, not its enemies; may provoke our admiration, not our hostility. Oh! that noble character may awake our love, and not our anger. Oh! that there may be such a spirit in us that Jesus may be a gift of peace to our souls, and not simply a gift of the sword. Swords there are and must be, conflicts in the soul itself, for the word of truth cannot do its work even in those who are in affinity with it without sometimes giving pain. To follow truth and conscience, love and right, will not seldom be a sword piercing to the heart of even true disciples. But oh! may God preserve us from the sin and folly of making to ourselves a sword out of the teaching of Christ, or out of any new truth, by setting ourselves in bitter opposition against it.

At some time or other, it will surely happen that a Truth, a Duty, a Cause, a Service calls us to make a choice. There comes a day when we have to decide whether we will go with or against the great opportunity, whether it shall be a blessing or a curse. That occasion offers each the bloom or blight. Oh! that in that day we may make our choice with the holy, the good, the true.

## Tarry-at-Home Husbands.

To be continually rubbed by a nutmeg-grater would probably prove nearly the most cruel torture which could be devised. When two people live incessantly together, it is just possible that both may be smooth as nutmegs, or both may be rasping as graters; but by far the more common case is for one to be nutmeg and the other grater. There is, for example, the woman with a voice like a file, and manners tart as vinegar, who keeps up a constant irritation about every trifle, till her sensitive companion feels raw all over. And there is the man who fusses and fumes about a house all day long, scolding his wife for everything which happens, worrying the servants to death, finding everything at table uneatable, every window open when it ought to be shut or shut when it ought to be open, and every fire badly lighted or not lighted at all, till his miserable family wish they were once for all scraped to death with oyster-shells, rather than so scarified, morning, noon, and night.

It is hard to say which is the worse of these plagues, the male or the female; but at least when a man finds he has married a nutmeg-grater wife, he may spend the larger part of his existence out of doors, and offer—poor fellow!—only a sleepy exterior to the horrid instrument of torture after the day's excursion is ended. The fussy husband, on the contrary, is, by the hypothesis, a creature who stops at home all day, and goes mewing over the house like a discontented tom-cat, when he ought to be out of doors and out of hearing. The wife who sees her husband very seldom and for a few brief hours may, perhaps, deserve our pity; but the wife who never loses sight of her lord is assuredly far worse off; and we may doubt whether, if Mr. Adam never went into the next grove to prune his vines while Mrs. Eve was laying the dinner, Paradise, after all, was quite so cheerful as one John Milton has affirmed. Why is it (if our theory be not true) that sailors and their wives are so notoriously tenderly attached to each other, that a novelist has nothing to do but to describe the "Captain's lady" pining for him on shore, or a singer to allude to the young mother in her cottage while her husband is "far on the wild raging sea," to draw immediate tears from everybody's eyes? Nobody that ever we heard of, except Cowper, has thought of making capital of Mr. and Mrs. Gilpin working so many years together—and it was their temporary separation, after all, wherein lay the poetry of their lives!—or of the Clergyman who potters round his house, his school, his church, and his garden from morning to night, never allowing Mrs. Clergywoman to feel one instant sure he is out of hearing when her tenth baby is cutting its teeth, or out of sight when Mary Ann wants to sweep out the study. Even when a husband is amiably disposed, and reasonably amenable to the necessities of feminine existence, his presence is a *gêne* and a bore. It is inconceivable what it must be when he is not only intruding himself at all hours, and poking himself everywhere, but also establishing a little private impromptu Inquisition in the drawing-room, parlour, bedroom, or

kitchen, wherever he may happen to be; and adding a new commandment to the Decalogue every month.

A cynic once observed that most women spend their lives, first in trying to get a husband and then in trying to get rid of him. Even the persons who advertise for situations as housekeepers, and describe themselves as "thoroughly domesticated"—as if the rest of humankind were but half-tamed beasts—would hardly wish to find their husbands also "thoroughly domesticated," and desirous of stopping always by the fireside. Never yet, we are thoroughly persuaded, has there been a master of a household so tenderly beloved, but that his temporary absence is occasionally felt as a relief by his adoring wife and daughters. And in not a few cases, especially in that of the fussy husband, when the said absence is to be prolonged for a few days, do we not invariably, on paying a chance visit, perceive a special lightness of heart revealed by the whole feminine community? First, the servant who opens the door, and displays a vista of stair-carpets up—mops, brooms, and tubs in the background—grins delightedly in our face; and then Materfamilias runs out and tells us, with infinite glee, "Oh! Mr. Jones will be *so* sorry to miss you. He has gone to Brighton for two days; and so the girls and I intend having an early tea, with muffins, and going to the play." Even when there is no "play" in question, that English female Saturnalia, or festival of the Bona Dea, with muffins and buttered toast, instead of meat and wine, seems, by some occult law, to be invariably celebrated whenever the Paterfamilias goes from home, and a certain general loosening of the reins of kitchen and nursery discipline accompanies the innocent refection. Of course if "Papa" is going away for a twelvemonth to the Antipodes, it is quite another story, even though he be fussy. Then there are tears and wailing and dispirited looks all over the household, instead of the mops and the muffins. But, undoubtedly, the secret of true conjugal happiness—sad as it may sound to say it—is for Edwin to leave his Angelina to herself for some hours every day and for some few days in every year. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," and also makes it tenfold more easy to keep a bright hearth and a bright face ready for the evening's *re-union* with a fresh accumulation of kindly feelings on both sides. Romantic young brides, for the first six months of wedded happiness, do not see this, and often coax their husbands to abandon the professions which should occupy their days, that they may tie them to their own apron-strings. A year or two later, and they have generally ample reason to repent their folly, and to sigh and wish that "poor dear Fred" had "something to do, you know, which would interest him, and take him a little out of the house now and then——"

The simple fact is, that when two human beings, even two sisters or two brothers, live incessantly together, they must either rub against each other, as we have said, like grater and nutmeg, or else draw mental life off from one another, till one or both are exhausted, like vampire and victim. There are people who are content to do this, to suck out the vital spirits of a man or of a woman, as they would the juice of an orange, and then cast the dry husk aside and find another. But where there is to be any permanent happiness of union, there must be care to bring in fresh life and thought and feeling on both sides—or, at the very least, on one side—continually. And this can but be done by that which is, after all, the simple order of nature, that "Man should go forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening."

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

## American Notes.

Cambridge, Mass.,
May 28th, 1906.

THE May Meetings of the American Unitarian Association, with its kindred Societies, have just come to an end, and it may interest the readers of the SEED SOWER to learn an Englishman's impresion of the Liberal Religion movement on this side the water. In addition to the great meetings of the A.U.A., The Women's Alliance, The Sunday School Society, and the Young People's Religous Union meet in the same week, to say nothing of a number of Side Shows, such as the Ministerial Union, Temperance Society, Free

Religion Association, Historical Society, etc., making up a programme of twenty-eight meetings—enough to appal the courage of the toughest and stoutest of the delegates. I did not attempt the whole programme, but such meetings as I attended impressed me very strongly with the hopeful spirit and splendid optimism of our American brethren. They evidently are confident that they have the ball at their feet. The reports of the various Societies speak of growing numbers, enlarged opportunities, and increased financial support. The statement of the Treasurer of the A.U.A. is a most striking document. During the last year the Churches contributed for the support of the Association £18,000. But this is not enough. The assembly passed a resolution urging that a sum of £30,000 be raised in the new year. In addition, more than £6,000 has been raised for the Ministerial Aid Fund, and £10,000 for the San Francisco Churches wrecked by the earthquake. The total income for the year from all sources, including various Trust Funds, reached nearly £66,000. After that England must take a back seat! But it is not the monetary aspect of the movement which is the most encouraging. It is the spirit, the "all-aliveness," the eagerness to seize new opportunity, the determination to adapt the work to the changed and changing life of the times. A great door appears to be open in the far West, and a most interesting work in going on among the Scandinavian communities of the Middle West. While New England still remains the stronghold of Unitarianism, and Boston its Mecca, and while two-thirds of the financial strength of the Association still comes from the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, the great West appears to offer the most favourable field for Liberal Religion, and some day the centre of gravity may be shifted from Boston to Chicago or even Denver.

On Monday evening, May 21st, I attended the public reception of Ministers and Delegates at the Somerset Hotel, when about 2,000 persons shook hands with President Eliot, and his father, the President of Harvard University. The two Eliots, father and son, count for very much in American Unitarianism. The father, C. W. Eliot, is, I suppose, the most distinguished Principal Harvard has ever had, and is a man honoured all over the States. His son, the Rev. S. Eliot, D.D., is the permanent President of the A.U.A., and it is largely owing to his energy, counsel, and initiative, and to the confidence which the Churches and the business men of New England have in him, that the Association owes the wonderful advances it has made during the last five years.

The Business Meetings of the Association were held in Tremont Temple, a huge building, seating 3,000 persons, owned by the Baptists, and let by them to all and sundry during the week. Most interesting reports were read from the Committees on Education, Foreign Relations, Church Extension, Fellowship, Publication, the New American Building Fund, Ministerial Aid etc., etc. Ample time was given for the discussion of business, and it was not a mere routine affair. At a subsequent meeting, most interesting addresses were given by the "Field Agents" on the opportunities in the North, South, East, and West. The "Field Agents" are Ministers appointed and paid by the Association to develope the work over vast areas.

On Wednesday evening I had the honour of preaching the Annual Sermon in the Tremont Temple. A congregation of about 2,500 persons sang the hymns with great fervour, and created for the preacher an inspiring atmosphere.

On Thursday evening I attended the Annual Meeting of the Young People's Religious Union in the South Congregational Church (Ministers, Revs. E. E. Hale and W. Cummings). The Church was well filled by a congregation mostly of young people, who sang their hymns and joined in the service with great heartiness. It was a great pleasure to me to offer the greeting and good wishes of the Guild's Union of the National Conference to its vigorous parent in America. The occasion was made memorable by the appearance of the Rev. Jenkyn Lloyd Jones, of Chicago, who was announced as one of the speakers, and who delivered a most powerful and striking address on the "Commission of Youth." It was a remarkably varied utterance, pungent, witty, scornful, pathetic, a tremendous indictment of certain aspects of American life, and

a vigorous call to the young manhood and womanhood of the land to bravely stand for purity, honesty, truth, reform. *But*—it was an hour and twenty minutes long, and before the speaker had finished half the audience had vanished to catch their trains.

The Union has a membership of 160 Guilds, and an income from all sources of more than £600. In addition, it raised through its various branches a sum of £100 for the San Francisco sufferers. It has just published a very elaborate "Topic Manual," embracing a large number of subjects for study, reading, and addresses, under thirty-eight different headings. It employs a "Field Agent," whose business it is to visit the Local Guilds, and to extend the movement. Twelve new Societies joined the Union during the year. The most important feature of the new work suggested is the formation of a "Guild at Large and School and College Guild," with the view of getting into touch with the boys and girls of Unitarian families, who are away at the great Public Schools and Colleges, cut off from their home and church associations, and subject to peculiar temptations. As in England these young people are not seldom led away from the faith of their fathers to the more fashionable and popular churches of their class mates. It is hoped that the "Guild at Large," by keeping up communication with them, will do something to preserve and quicken their interest in the cause of Liberal thought and religious progress.

On Friday evening the week's meetings wound up with a "Unitarian Festival," also in the Tremont Temple. The "Festival" is a huge banquet, the chief features of which, after the meats, are ice-cream, flowers, speeches, hymn-singing, and general congratulations. The Governor of State of Massachusetts, the Hon. Curtis Guild, presided, and speeches were given by Dr. Ames, Mr. Kent, Louis Rouillon, and myself. It was a decidedly gay affair, attended not only by the banqueters, but by large numbers of people in the galleries who paid a dollar each to come in and hear the speeches. Marvellous is the appetite of the American Unitarian for speeches!

JOSEPH WOOD.

## Our Missions.

### II.

THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, DOMESTIC MISSION, FAZELEY STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

Minister—REV. THOMAS PIPE.

THE Editor has asked me to write a short account of the above Mission. At once a difficulty arises owing to limitation of space. As good old John Newton once said, "It is so much easier to say a great deal about a little, than a little about a great deal." To give anything approaching a description of our work in a brief sketch is an impossible task; I can only suggest a few of its most striking features.

The history of beginnings is always interesting, so I will just glance at the inception of the Mission sixty-two years ago. It began in a cottage in Stafford Street—in a place called "the gullet"—a name sufficiently descriptive. In two years the growth of the work rendered removal necessary, and more convenient buildings were found in Baily Street. After a year's sojourn here the effort so extended that enlarged accommodation had again to be sought, and in 1848 the Mission settled down in Laurence Street, which place for forty years continued to be the headquarters of quite a large cluster of operations into which the Institution developed. The expiration of the lease there, and the pulling down of slum property made another move necessary, and eighteen years ago it took possession of the more commodious premises at Fazeley Street.

It was a change of centre, but not in the character of its work. It was a removal in accordance with its initial principle—wherever the need is greatest there let us plant our agency. The present neighbourhood of the Mission claims the distinction of being the poorest and most wretched district in Birmingham. The main thoroughfare, Fazeley Street, has little in it to please the eye, and branching from it are numerous streets running in many directions: these are more or less connected in a network of passages, from which courts open—some large and some small—and differing but in deepening degrees

of poverty and squalor. On Saturday nights many of these are the scenes of brutal violence, debauchery, and disorder. Only ironfoundries, factories, chemical works, and other business premises relieve the monotony. The dull-looking streets and houses, the pale, haggard-looking faces of woman—aged before their time—the melancholy hue of men, whose lives have been prematurely marked with failure—all these make up a picture whose gloomy tints might well embarass and distress the mind. Hard toil, hard fare, the painful absence of bright and varied social influences, the dead monotony of existence and work—these represent the every day condition of things.

With that rare spirit of adaptability, which the Mission has shown all through its history, it set to work in this most needy neighbourhood, caring for the children, sustaining the tempted, lifting up the fallen, and with the devotion and service of many helpers, carrying brightness and healthy influences into the most unlovely places.

The Mission is carefully organised to meet the needs of the population around. If you were to canvass the neighbourhood, and set down its most crying necessities, I think you would find these necessities fairly represented in the institution of the Mission. Fifteen happy years spent in this work, has brought not only a good knowledge of the lives and surroundings of those whom we are trying to benefit, but valuable experience as to the best methods of really and permanently helping them. If I were to be asked what idea has been most forcibly presented to my mind during this lengthened connection with the work, I think I should answer—the immense power of personal influence exerted in the home in the ordinary association of unassuming friendship. This lesson is borne home to me by the history of each department of my work. In club, in class, in meeting, among children and grown-ups, in the case of the poorest and better-to-do, I have seen it abundantly proved. Everywhere I have watched the marvellous transforming power which the sympathetic friend exercises, who brings within the reach of others simple kindliness and patient persevering care. The bulk of those who remain in dull ignorance, or wander into evil ways, need friends—wise, self-sacrificing friends. They have not had them in childhood, they cannot find them in later life. The little gutter child reveals unsuspected nobility, unselfishness, capacity for refinement when he finds a true friend. The wayward girl, the rough boy, wake to a new life when it is brought within their reach. Lives wasted for the lack of finding true friends, this is the story of the poor up the courts and alleys of our large towns and cities—and may I say, lives wasted for lack of seeking to make friends among the poor, this is the story of many a moral failure among the rich and favoured. With a long experience before me, I say deliberately, that for successful mission work, for the cause of social redemption in all its aspects—religious, moral, educational—this is the first, second, third.

Having these convictions, I have always made visitation in the home the basis of my Mission work. I can thankfully point to hundreds of persons, who were once living in utter indifference who are now interested in things of an improving nature; many are regular attendants at our services and meetings, and there is satisfactory evidence that the good influence upon their hearts and minds is now bringing forth fruit in their daily lives; and I can truly say, respecting nearly every one of these, that the work began by visiting them in their homes. Here confidence is gained, affection called forth, and this friendship is the first stepping stone which helps to a brighter future..

We hear a great deal in the present about how to reach the masses. This is not so much a question with the Missionary—as how to reach individuals. We do not work from the circumference to the centre of the circle, but from the centre outwards, trying to get hold of the individuals one by one, until they are all joined together in a perfect unity, in our services and meetings. The method of Jesus —the greatest Missionary among the poor—appears to have been going to men one by one, and some of the most interesting sermons he ever preached were to a congregation of one. I cannot imagine his trying to move the masses except by first moving the individuals who form the masses.

### Religious Services.

Whilst, however, home visitation is the all-important basis of our work, our Sunday Services are valuable adjuncts. These latter, without the former, would be, comparatively speaking, useless in a poor neighbourhood, where people are so apathetic and indifferent. The weekly religious services are the natural complement to home visitation. The preacher is more readily listened to on Sunday, if he is known as a friend in the home, while his clear knowledge of the heart of the people, and his personal touch with them in every-day life, will give his appeal to the conscience great force.

The Chapel accommodates between four and five hundred, and is always full, sometimes overflowing. This weekly service is greatly appreciated as a quiet resting place, where the sons and daughters of toil, overburdened with the cares and anxieties of life, can draw aside for a few moments and hear of blessings in store for the upright. They look forward to these opportunities of social worship with great delight. And if anything happens to prevent their attending, they often tell me how they feel the miss in their lives, and the week that follows is not quite the same for them. They soften and sweeten the hard, bitter life of men who are crushed by an almost insupportable despair, drawing their thought away to the only real source of eternal consolation, and opening to their view visions of the unseen helper. Hearty singing for all to join in, prayer to voice the needs of all, straight speech to all upon their highest duties, these are the characteristics of the service. The people welcome the encouraging Gospel which we have to offer, they know without telling that the way of transgressors is hard, what they do not know is the long-suffering, the tenderness and omnipotence of God's love. Believing strongly as we do in the religious side of our work, the large attendances at these services sustained year after year,—regardless of changing seasons and varied weather—is our greatest encouragement.

A Men's Provident and Sick Club fills a very necessary place among our Congregational Institutions, and is a centre of social life and friendly intercourse. This club is a true brotherhood of men, caring for and helping each other by systematic visiting of absentee and sick members. The rules are very stringent, and enforced without fear or favour, and the smoothness with which it all works testifies that the working man, when he is really interested and guided, can work in a thoroughly business-like way.

The Mothers' Own meets one afternoon each week. We have always as many as the room will accommodate, and a list of names awaiting for admission. The meeting is of great importance, and re-acts upon men and children and homes throughout the whole district. To be surrounded every week by one hundred and fifty mothers, means having to do with nearly as many husbands, and with three or four hundred children—and I always try and keep in mind this audience in the background. It is much more than is often spoken of as a Mothers' Meeting. It combines a variety of features. It is a two hours' women's club, about half-an-hour of which is spent in cheery private chat. It is an association of co-operative thrift. Weekly payments are taken for clothing, for enabling its members to get coals, shoes, and other necessaries. It is a benevolent agency, the women performing for each other many helpful deeds of sympathy in times of sickness and trouble, and out of their own contributions giving much-needed help. It is above all, and through all, a religious service, and to many of its members the only inspiration to higher and better things. At intervals helpful books are read, and addreses given on many aspects of duty, personal, domestic, and hygiene. The effect of such influences as are at work in this weekly meeting cannot be mistaken. The indirect result on the homes and in the general social atmosphere of the neighbourhood may be inferred; so large a mass of motherhood meeting every week cannot fail to pass on to husband and children and friends the good influences which it has received.

### The People's Drawing Room.

This social function, commenced ten years ago, continues to give unbounded satisfaction. It is held in our large schoolroom, and is a very bright and welcome spot. It is held twice each month during the winter. Seventy guests are invited to each meeting. The carpet down, curtains up, chairs and tables

dotted about, piano invitingly open, games,—giving the opportunity of all sorts of friendships, and an atmosphere of friendliness pervading all, makes it just a large family gathering. Friends and subscribers come down and give us songs, readings, and brightness in various forms. They form splendid opportunities for cementing the social bonds. Tired men and women, after long hours of exhausting work, have been rested by music, by sympathy, and by friendly games. A cup of coffee during the evening, and a closing hymn, in which, as one family, we all unite, make up a delightful element in our social life.

PLEASANT SATURDAY EVENINGS.

The history of our Saturday Night Concerts stretches back to the first winter of my settlement at the Mission. Capital programmes of music have been provided. We are careful to preserve a good tone in all that is done, and the marked success of these gatherings is an evidence that we have formed a right estimate of what people need and enjoy. Working men, who would certainly otherwise have been in the public-house, have come in large numbers. The effect of these gatherings has not only been preventative, but positively helpful, in many cases proving a stepping stone to our Sunday services. There is an interval for refreshments, when the stewards are busy selling the buns and coffee.

A feature that impreses everyone familiar with the working of the Mission is the emphasis that is laid upon the work among the young. Its institutions touch the young life of the neighbourhood at every point.

The Sunday School is one of the foremost agencies. There are upwards of five hundred scholars on the roll, with a high average morning and afternoon attendance. There is continuity which is a happy guarantee for future prosperity and increase—the finest workers the Mision possesses have been grown in the school.

The Children's Boot Fund, Savings' Club, Teachers' Benevolent Society, Window Gardening Society, The Band of Hope—with its Junior and Senior Branches,—The Anti-Cigarette League, Girls' Club, Young Men's Club, Health Culture Classes, Cricket and Cycle Clubs, Football Clubs, Cripple Class, Girls' Recreation Class. These are some of the connected institutions which surround the children and young folk with all kinds of helpful influences every evening during the week.

The Mission is unique in character and operation, and fills a place in the neighbourhood no other institution can. The people of the district for a wide area look to it as a centre of applied Christianity. It takes in the poor and wretched, administers consolation to the suffering and weak. It takes the young by the hand, and by means of its numerous agencies tries to develop them into fairly rounded men and women, and throws over all these classes of the poor the enriching influence of light and truth and love.

## *Notes and Jottings.*

THE Whit-week meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association suffered somewhat in point of numbers from coming so closely after the Oxford Assembly of the National Conference, but they maintained their usual level of interest and enthusiasm. Dr. Drummond's sermon was in every sense a great utterance, which we all accepted with gratitude as a gracious gift from a venerable and saintly character. In it experience and scholarship blended to produce a word of profound wisdom and pure spirituality. Our internal differences were not evaded or ignored, but honestly reconciled in the catholicity for which the sermon so powerfully pleaded. Doubtless the Association will see that it is widely circulated; for surely no more valuable pamphlet could be published.

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Dr. Crothers' Essex Hall Lecture was very cordially received, and we are all eagerly looking forward to reading it in its printed form. Was it by design or accident that the Lecturer began in 1906 with precisely the same illustration with which he concluded his beautiful address five years ago on the "Sympathy of Religions"? In any case it was an appropriate ending then and an apt beginning now; and readers of the SEED SOWER may be glad to have it reproduced as printed in 1901. This is it—

* * * * * *

"As you stand at the base of a mountain you see perhaps a cloud hanging on the summit. It seems to you as if the little cloud has drifted across the sky, and is 'shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind.' But

as you approach you find that the wind is keen, and you see the hurrying particles of the mist. You ask why does not the wind drive the cloud away. Then you come to see that you are in the great laboratory of the v. where the clouds are being made. From the low-lands the winds are sweeping up, trying to storm the mountains, forcing up the moisture-laden air. Just as they reach the summit the burden they have carried becomes visible. The wind is ever driving the particles away, the wind ever forming there the cloud."

* * * * * *

And then comes the interpretation of nature's parable. For "so it is with all the heights of human life. They are always shrouded in mystery. The winds do not dissipate it, they create it. Courage, love, devotion are lifted up to the heights. Behold there the ever-present mystery of godliness! All life is touched at last by something which we cannot understand. The whole life of man, all his civilization, all his knowledge, all his achievements, are borne along by eternal forces, and reach at length to that great mystery wherein the thought of that which is highest in man blends insensibly with religion and with worship."

* * * * * *

Could anything better symbolise for us "the making of religion"? It was a fortunate accident or a happy thought that the figure should have been thus repeated. For does it not symbolise also the truth that after lapse of time and separation, we take up our friends at the precise point where we last saw them, and resume our communion with them where we left off, as if there had been no break at all in our association?

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The movement among the Churches on behalf of more strenuous and collective social work proceeds apace, and seems likely to produce something more practical than mere pamphleteering. "The National Conference Union for Social Service" has now formulated its constitution, and we shall soon have before the Churches its suggestions and schemes of work. Among the Social Questions Committees already existing in connection with some of our District Associations, the recently-formed North Midland Social Questions Committee is to be reckoned. Its circular to the churches is a document of great weight and seriousness, and sets forth certain special reasons why our churches, even more than others, should find means for the expression of their corporate religious life through appropriate collective actions.

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One of these reasons is that the absence of subscription to an authoritative creed makes impossible for us those doctrinal standards which in the dogmatic churches are intended to secure cohesion and firmness of church-life. We have indeed that unity of spirit and worship which is for a brief time expressed in our Sunday devotions. But beyond this the corporate and organic nature of our Christian fellowship is hardly, if at all, exercised. And yet, it is pointed out, without exercise and expression in act and deed as well as in praise and prayer our Church-life must, like an unused limb, suffer weakness and decay and ultimately perish. We cannot indeed find an intellectual bond in dogma, but we may find a practical and really uniting bond in common work and social service. Nothing can bind men more closely together than a general will focussed and concentrated on a common social purpose.

* * * * * *

It is moreover urged that it is incumbent upon our Churches to justify their existence as separate congregations. In the past the intellectual emancipation of the Christian Faith was left almost exclusively to us. This is no longer so. We have now no monopoly in Liberal Theology, and we do not regret but rejoice that in the work of purging Christianity of irrational and superstitious dogmas we have allies and comrades in churches not of our immediate communion. But precisely in so far as this, as a special reason for our separate existence, has been weakened is it necessary for us to find distinctive congregational work in other fields of human service. It is not enough to stand only for Religious Liberty. We must show the world that this liberty is not a liberty of indifference, but a liberty of religious and social enthusiasm, fulfilling its end through vigorous collective action undertaken in the Name of Him whose service is perfect freedom.—J. M. Lloyd Thomas.

## A Traveller's Diary.

(By the Two Selves in the Same Man.)

### I.—*The Pessimist's Story.*

*Monday.* Got up before six o'clock. Too early. Insufficient sleep! What a beastly racket these alarm clocks make! Day promised to be insufferably hot, dirty, and uncomfortable. Very long journey before me. What a nuisance it is to have to shave every morning! Ten minutes a day wasted, at the least estimate. Ten times 365 more than sixty hours a year,—a week of working time! Ate a solitary breakfast. How thin country milk is! No one up to see me off. Very bad connections on these railways. Little thought for the convenience of travellers on the part of the big traffic managers. Came near losing my electric for want of accurate information. Really there are not ten accurate people in a thousand.

Strong coffee at breakfast not good for my nerves. Conductor tried to persuade me to go to end of his route: knew my business better than he did and got off at junction. Why should he want to make me travel farther on such a hot day? Suspicious circumstance! There will be a bad accident one of these days on this road. Had to carry my baggage from car to the station. Heavy work! Had long wait at B. for slow train. Very hot. Going to be hotter. Saw train approach in dense cloud of dust. Must breathe atmosphere of smoke and cinders all day. Neighbour in seat insisted on talking with me: not a person of culture. Arrived at P., with long wait for express train. Nothing to do but read morning paper. Too early for lunch: no likely chance for lunch or dinner all day. Express full of passengers. Driven into the "smoker" for seat,—a filthy place. Conductor quite too fresh: wanted to speak to every one. Pretended to call me by name. Between C. and A. a big farmer crowded into my seat. He wanted to talk. How people love to tell their affairs to perfect strangers! Windows all open. Cinders, dust, and heat. Whatever persuaded our forefathers to come to such a rough country? What great Harvard professor called this scenery "crude"?

Strange-looking men in the "smoker." What coarse features! Quite a good deal of drinking out of bottles. The drink made the men swear. Why don't they enforce their liquor laws in this State? What is the good of liquor laws anyway?

3 P.M. Sky grew overcast. Threatened thunder-showers. Likely to be bad weather for taking evening boat. Most likely fog.

Tired my eyes reading "William Ashe." Not a comfortable book: puts too great strain on the reader. Why bear your own troubles and those of imaginary people too?

Reached boat near supper-time, without any supper. Not a soul on the boat whom I knew. What lonesome business travelling is! Why do the women want to be away from home all summer?

No one to meet me at the N. Wharf. Have to go over to S. and probably hire some sort of a team. Hungry. Arrive at last. Journey enough for one day. They say it's a bad summer for mosquitoes.

### II.—*The Optimist's Story.*

Woke about six, well refreshed. A perfect summer morning. The kindly maid got me a most comfortable breakfast. My good hosts did just as I requested and did not try to see me off. Found a seat in the shade of a tree while I waited for the electric car. Wonderful system of railway connections to enable you to get across the country wherever you wish. The brainest men in the world seem to be working continually to further your convenience. Car ride perfectly delightful, partly across the open fields. Fresh morning air like nectar. The country at its loveliest. Everyone most obliging to answer questions and give information. Not always accurate information, but easily enough corrected if you ask questions enough.

Reached railway station at B. Short walk over bridge from end of electric line. Not sorry for a bit of a walk. Found cool corner of railway platform. Made acquaintance of man whom I had seen on electric.

Very comfortable accommodation train: slightly late, but what of it? As a friend says, "One has to be somewhere!" Took seat with stranger of the morning. Had very interesting talk. A New England boy, he had to go West for his health, had made his own way, and now had business of his own in an Illinois town. Is deacon of a Baptist church,

but so different from the typical deacon! Quite Broad Church in his sympathies. I asked him how far he could use the Golden Rule in his business. He answered that he could not live without it. He praised the loyal-hearted honest Germans in his city: they were his best friends. He was on his annual visit to his father and mother. He had a watchful eye for the beautiful scenery and the prosperous farms through which we passed. What are the people thinking of who say that all business is "graft"? This happy and honest man is one of many who, without figuring in the newspapers, make the strength of the nation. Had a quiet half-hour at the comfortable station at P. waiting for the express. Laid in fruit and sandwiches for luncheon later on. The traveller must indeed be hard to suit who cannot find everything to his convenience in these days.

Took the smoking-car by preference, not to smoke, but because I observe the smokers are always provided with more air and space than other travellers. Besides, the smoking-car, being commonly near the locomotive, is comparatively freer from dust. You can also sit in your shirt sleeves if it is very hot. The conductor amused me,—a jolly, good-humoured man, he had a pleasant word for all of us, as if we were all comrades. Had an old farmer for a while as seat-companion. It is good fun to talk with all kinds of men. It is a rare man who cannot teach you something. My companion knew the country through which we passed. He was no pessimist about farming. "You could live well by it in New England," he said. We talked of the new social conditions that the telephone and electric lines were making for the farmers. At last he grew confidential. He told me that he was a widower, and that he could give the right kind of girl an excellent home. There must be women in the city, he believed, that would like to live on his farm. The trouble was to find them. Ah! if I could only, only have played the benevolent match-maker and told him how to win the heart of a certain admirable woman whom I knew, of just the suitable age for him, wearing her life out in a city store and always longing for country life!

*Early afternoon.* The clouds came up in the West and made the air delightfully cool. In spite of early indications it has turned out a good day for travelling. We sped through a pretty part of the State, with green fields, plenty of lakes and streams and distant hills—everything beautiful. You could scarcely bear to keep your eyes from the shifting scenery. What a wonderful world it is! Men came and went at different stations. How rare it is to see a really bad face among them! Good nature prevails. Some swearing, but rarely any ugly language. Query, Are not ugly words really worse than profane?—a more harmful kind of profanity?

Everything ran on time to-day. We found the little steamer waiting for us in the late afternoon. It was rather good to give up trying to read "William Ashe," and to give undivided attention to the glorious bay and the hills. The story too tragic to fit the day, but a fine strand of gold is woven into it.

The purser gave friendly nod of recognition. How courteous the men who serve you and take your money mostly are if you give them a bit of a chance! Found unexpectedly acquaintances going around on the boat from B. to S. They gave right cordial greeting. If seems as if friends were ready to turn up wherever you go. These summer friendships are among the pleasantest you make. To be sure, you see people on their best side. But is it not their real side?

My good daughter met me with the row-boat at S. Nothing could be better than the little row across the harbour. How the old charm of the place takes one into it at once! Altogether a happy day and a most homelike ending to it.

## *Sunday School Lessons from the Old Testament.*

### V.—JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

(GENESIS, CHAPTERS XLII.-XLV.)

LESSON TEXT.—"Ye that trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat." . . . "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."—*Amos v. 11; Isaiah i., 17.*

READ the chapters mentioned, watching for marks of dual authorship. Compare xliv. 20 with xlvi. 21, 26. Note xliv. 5, 15.

I. OUTLINE OF THE STORY IN THIS LESSON.

During the great seven years' famine throughout the whole world Jacob sends his sons, each with his ass and sack, to Egypt to buy corn.

There Joseph, governor of Egypt, selling corn in person, recognises them, and insists that Benjamin, Rachael's other child, the little one whom his father had kept at home (xliv. 20), shall be brought with them when they come again. Jacob, when his sons on their return tell him this, reluctantly, when starvation stares them in the face, consents; and Joseph, having cruelly terrified his brethren by placing money in their sacks on each occasion, and finally his divining cup in Benjamin's, whom he then threatens to keep as his slave, makes himself known to them, and brings Jacob and all his kindred to Egypt, where they live in the land of Goschen.

II. The Dual Source of the Narrative.

As in the earlier chapters about Joseph (which we considered in last lesson), so here we find abundant traces that what we read is a compilation. The account which was current in Judah (J) has been combined with the account current in Ephraim (E). In the main, these two versions closely resemble one another; but some of the features which enable us to separate them are interesting. J uses the name Israel where E holds to Jacob. The change is very marked in xlv. 27, 28. J makes Judah stand surety for Benjamin: the northern story gives that place to Reuben. (See lesson xii. § ii.). In chapter xlii. 27 and 35 we seem to have a suggestion that contrary to J's version the brothers do not discover the money in their sacks till they have returned home. E alone tells us how Joseph charged his brethren with being spies. J gives us the story of how Joseph feasted with his brethren, "and they drank and were drunken with him" (xliii. 34, amended version). J, in agreement with his own account in xxxvii. 27, makes Joseph speak of his having been sold into Egypt (xlv. 4, 5). He similarly, in xliv. 28, corroborates his own version of the torn coat in xxxvi. 33. Thus, although we cannot be sure as to details, we can still fairly well separate the two elements, and recover the two similar but still independent accounts (J and E) which have been combined by the editor of the early collection of Israel's stories of the past.

III. Noteworthy Points.

1. Benjamin, in the southern version of the story at any rate, is represented as a "lad," "a little one" (xliv. 20, 22, 30, etc.). But in xlvi. 21. 26, we find that Benjamin is already the father of ten sons. (Compare the note on the age of Ishmael in lesson vi. § iii. 3 c). We cannot well have more striking evidences of compilation than these.

2. Note in xliv. 5, 15, the southern author speaks of Joseph's "divining" and of his "divining cup," as if such things were perfectly familiar to his readers. Moreover, he does not seem to consider such things "evil in the sight of Jahweh," as they were in later times regarded (Deut. xviii. 10, 2 Kings xvii. 17). It seems undoubted that in the eighth century the habit of consulting those who professed thus to foretell coming events was still common. It was against this alliance of the worship of Jahweh with all manner of superstition that the prophetic movement which resulted in Josiah's great reformation in 621 was in part directed.

3. It is well to note that Jacob and those who came with him to Egypt, including Joseph and his family, were only seventy souls (xlvi 27, Ex. i. 5). Their descendants, who left Egypt in the fourth generation thereafter, according to Gen. xv. 16, are said to have numbered just after the Exodus (Num. ii. 32) more than six hundred thousand fighting men alone, which cannot well represent a total of less than some two millions of persons.

IV. Can the Narrative before us be regarded as Historically Accurate?

The picture of Joseph, the governor of Egypt, selling corn in person to the whole world; Jacob's sending his ten sons each with an ass and one sack to fetch supplies from Egypt to Palestine; the seven years' famine over all the face of the earth; the fact that the cattle seem to have survived without the Hebrews having thought of utilizing them for food,—all show us (without our paying any attention to the various discrepancies of the narrative) that here we have once more one of those picturesque traditions of early days which were told at festival after festival around the sacred altars and pillars of Palestine for many generations before they were gathered together in the written form in which we have them. To attempt to regard them as serious historical narratives is only to betray ignorance of the growth of all early folk-lore.

V. Questions.

1. Mention some points which show us that we have here two versions of the story of Joseph.

2. Is the belief in divination common in very early times? Can you describe any of the ways in which men believed they could thus foretell the future?

3. What different accounts of Benjamin's age have we? How do you account for the difference?

4. What do you think of Joseph's treatment of his brethren? Was it right of him to cause his father intense suffering by his demand for Benjamin? Is it ever right to return evil for evil?

5. What does our text say about taking advantage of another's poverty? Do you think it is true?

6. Was Joseph right in using the famine which threatened the Egyptians with starvation to rob them of land, cattle, and liberty?

7. Is any bargain right which does not satisfy both buyer and seller?

8. What do you think of Isabella's words in "Measure for Measure,"—

"It is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
to use it like a giant"?

## News from the Field.

Again we find ourselves called upon to record changes among our Ministers, and Congregations. Movement, in a legitimate sense, means life and progress. It may be so interpreted among us. Our record is full of variety.

We notice the *Rev. E. Parry, B.A.*, of *Ilminster*, has resigned his charge, and that the *Rev. J. J. Shaw, M.A.*, of Newchurch, has taken the same step, both, we understand, with a view to other and larger fields. On the other hand the *Rev. J. J. Jones, B.A.*, goes to *Accrington*, the *Rev. H. Dawtrey, B.A.*, is to be Pastor at *Higher Broughton*. *Herbert E. Perry*, brother of the late *Rev. C. Perry*, has gone into the Ministry at *Denton*, as colleague of the Rev. Lawrence Scott and was inducted by *Revs. H. E. Dowson, James C. Street*, and *E. Priestley Evans* under most encouraging auspices; and the *Rev. F. H. Vaughan, B.A.*, of *Hull*, has accepted a call to *Mansfield*. We note with pleasure that *Rev. Dr. Tudor Jones* has received a warm welcome at *Wellington, New Zealand*, and has begun his work there with great promise of success.

At *Walmsley*, *Mrs. A. Greg* has laid the foundation of New School buildings; at *Bewdley* the *Rev. J. Stronge* and his *Kidderminster* friends have reopened an old Chapel of ours long closed against our services. At *Acton* a new church has been opened; and at *Attercliffe, Sheffield*, a new School Church has been opened, free of debt, and with great promise.

The *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* held its Anniversaries in Whit-week, and the frends of the Sunday Schools met during the same week. All the meetings, including those connected with the study of Social Questions, and the Temperance Reform were well attended, and much ability and enthusiasm were manifested. The addresses of *Dr. Crothers*, the sermon of *Dr. Drummond*, the papers of the *Revs. A. W. Fox, J. J. Wright, T. P. Spedding, Gertrud von Petzold* and others created a deep impression, and shewed a vital appreciation of the best thoughts and most living work among us, and the discussions which followed evidenced the deep interest felt by the members of our free Congregations who were gathered together. The Anniversaries were undoubtedly proofs of a rising tide of life and thought and gave a spirit of enterprise and hopefulness which will be felt throughout the country.

The *Manchester Sunday School Union* held its great gathering, as usual, in the *Free Trade Hall*, and about 5,000 children, teachers, and friends listened with interest to the address of *Mr. George Smith*, and sang their hymns with great earnestness and beauty of expression.

At *Crewe* the *South Cheshire and District Association* met. The Preacher was *Rev. Gertrud von Petzold*, and the speakers at the evening meeting were *Alderman Briggs, Rev. James C. Street*, and *Dendy Agate, B.A.* The whole of the proceedings were marked by life and animation, and proved to be the best ever held at Crewe.

At *Sidmouth* the Western Union had a pleasing meeting, and at *Evesham* the *Warwickshire and District* Ministers met under happy auspices, *Dr. Crothers* being the Preacher, and the Congregation, as is their custom, shewing an almost boundless and certainly most pleasing hospitality.

The *Unitarian Van* goes on its interesting way through the country. Its Missioners are numerous and zealous, and in market places, waysides, and quiet villages numbers of people have gathered to listen to the Story of the Love of God, and the Brotherhood of Man, with hearty appreciation and great attention. The seed of God's Kingdom is being sown in fresh places, and many proofs abound that it is likely to bring forth good fruit.

The *Ministerial Fellowship* has held its Seventh Annual Meeting. It has now 137 members. It is doing a good work and kindling a spirit of Brotherhood among its members which cannot help being blessed in a thousand ways. It has proved its right to live, and it has come to stay.

The *General Baptists* (Unitarian) have just held their 253rd Annual Assembly. *Rev. J. Wain* was the Preacher at *Billingshurst*, the members seemed to be of good heart, and cheered each other as they met once again after their labours in scattered districts of the country.

It seems some of our *Leeds* friends are contemplating the formation of a *Yorkshire Club* for our Ministers and *Laymen*, and are taking steps to give it a good start. We wish it great success.

The *Wolverhampton* poeple have made pleasing presentation to *Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Perry* on their leaving that town to enter upon ministerial life at Denton. The incident was gratifying to all concerned.

It was pleasing to read in the "*Inquirer*," over the initials *E. W. L.*—a pretty story of wayfaring at *Champel*. We would like to interpret this as a proof that *Mr. Lummis* is gradually recovering from his ailment, and getting some steps nearer to the great work for which he is so eminently qualified. His friends are all over the country, and they will hail with delight his return into their midst.

We have again to record the loss of distinguished and faithful men and women—some of them venerable in years, and some in the vigour of their days, but all rich in good works, and leaving a fine record behind them. *Henry Nuttall* of *Newchurch*, aged 82, *F. A. Harrison*, of *Sydenham*, ripe in years, and bearing an honoured name among us, *Rev. R. C. Moore*, of *Horwich*, in mid-life struck down at his post of faithful work, *Rev. J. J. Bishop, B.A.*, a veteran whose bodily weakness has kept him in retirement for many years, *Mrs. Bowman Malcolm*, of *Belfast*, aged 80, a devoted worker, *Mrs. Holt*, of *Liverpool* wife of *R. D. Holt, J.P.*, loved and valued by many, *F. J. Broome*, of *Manchester*, *A. S. Wright*, of *Filby*, aged 99, *Miss Booth* of *Liverpool*, and *Mrs. Thornhill* of *Carlisle*—all brave and godly spirits who have entered into their rest.

Scrutator.

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